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Alcohol for inmates

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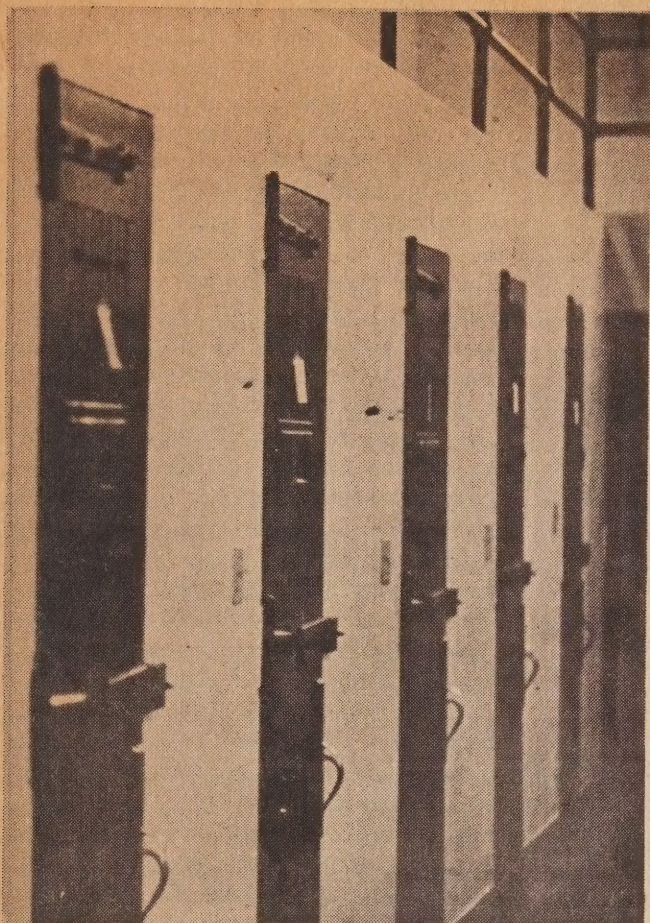
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CONTENTS:

The Prince Albert Suicides	page 1
Notes and Other Clutter	page 4
Hacksaw	page 5
The Right to Vote — Bill C-222	page 9
I'll Drink to That — Alcohol for Inmates	page 11
Self Help on a Grand Scale	page 15
Books in Brief	page 18
The Memoirs of Slow George	page 19
Mr. & Mrs. Society	page 21
The Subtle Art of Safecracking	page 24



THE DEAD

George Redhot
Edward Bazie
Leslie White
Larry Hart
Al Napio
Garry Gafka

THE PRINCE ALBERT SUICIDES

The P.A. suicides:

Between November 18, 1972 and June 16, 1973, six inmates of the Saskatchewan Penitentiary committed suicide.

Shortly after the last suicide, the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan conducted an informal investigation of the suicide. Now, in 1975, nearly two years after the sixth death, after nearly two years of all concerned trying to forget the entire matter, the report of that investigation has been made available.

It was not handed out to the establishment media, as the John Howard Society here so proudly does with most of its other reports. Rather, word drifted out that anyone who wanted a copy would be given it, if he requested. In this way the Society could not be accused of covering up the report nor accused of embarrassing the Penitentiary Service with the report's twelve "comments and criticisms."

Below are reprinted those twelve "comments and criticisms". They are not being reprinted because we want to embarrass the Penitentiary Service. They are being reprinted, because like the John Howard Society, we don't want to see more suicides. Since the six there has been a suicide in Millhaven and another in the B.C. Penitentiary. The circumstances were not much different.

The "comments and criticisms" from the report are below. They should be read by everyone working in corrections and by everyone being corrected. Some correctors will term the suicides "exceptions"; some inmates will call the deceased "friends". Who are the humans?

IGNORED, FORGOTTEN, OR HUSHED UP

A. The Redhot case points out graphically the inadequacies of the facilities of the Saskatchewan Penitentiary. The strip cells of the hospital section at the Penitentiary are used quite frequently in cases where an individual is considered to be a suicide risk. Both George Charles Redhot and Garry Gafka committed suicide inside Cell A24 which is the furthest removed and most difficult to observe of the cells.

The cells which are used as strip cells are on the second floor of the hospital section and are removed from the main traffic area in the institution to such a degree that it is extremely difficult to observe the individuals occupying these cells. (Please refer to rough diagram submitted in evidence at coroner's inquest by William Taylor, Correctional Officer 2, Sask. Penitentiary, Appendix B). Unless the inmate is directly against the bars at the front of the cell, he cannot be viewed from the main traffic area where the guard is normally stationed. Viewing is difficult even under such circumstances, and it must be pointed out that such circumstances did exist in both the suicide of George Charles Redhot and Garry Gafka since each was found hanging by an article of clothing attached to the bars at the front of the cell.

There is no provision for closed-circuit TV surveillance of these cells, and there is no provision of institutional personnel to keep these facilities under constant observation.

Some weeks after the last suicide occurred in the institution, the President of the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan and the Executive Director toured these facilities and found the conditions described above continue to exist. Such negligence appears to us to be inexcusable.

We consider the cell facilities (those presently used as strip cells in the hospital area) to be dangerously inadequate for the purposes of holding inmates with suicidal tendencies.

B. The misuse of medication in the Penitentiary is also illustrated in the Redhot case. Throughout the period from the 14th of November through to the 18th of November, encompassing two suicide attempts and one suicide threat, Mr. Redhot was viewed by correctional officers as being "overmedicated". They observed his speech to be slurred, his actions to be slow and uncoordinated. In a skin search of Mr. Redhot on the 17th of November



"one-half bottle of Valium" was found on his person.

We consider the use of medication and the distribution of medication to be in need of immediate review.

C. The awkward arrangement for the release of inmates who are held in box cells in the segregation area is illustrated in the case of Edward Bazie. It is also illustrated in the cases of Larry Edward Hart and Alphonse Napio. In all cases, the correctional officer who found the inmate hanging was unable to begin artificial respiration immediately. He was restricted to opening the outside door, releasing the inmate from the object which was used for the hanging attempt, and then calling for some one to obtain the keys. The estimated time elapse for the keys to arrive is approximately two or three minutes. We would suggest that this estimate relies on the best of circumstances existing. However, two or three minutes is possibly a crucial delay in cases of this nature.

D. In the case of Leslie Albert White, the facts as presented at the Coroner's inquest hearing indicate that Mr. White received medical attention at 4:00 o'clock A.M. and was not considered to be in serious enough condition at that time to warrant transfer either to the hospital facility in the Penitentiary or a hospital facility outside of the Penitentiary. Against the background of this decision it is difficult to understand how, between the hours of 4:00 A.M. and 5:00 A.M., Mr. White died from "bleeding to death" without significant further loss of blood.

In addition to this observation, we note that at no time did the hospital officer, Mr. Quinn, attend Mr. White during the full four hours Mr. White was in difficulty, except when he was called by Correctional officer staff.

We feel that the care and attention provided by the hospital staff in the case of Mr. White was grossly inadequate and definitely negligent.

E. Also in the case of Leslie Albert White, we feel the actions of the correctional officer staff are open to serious criticism. Although Mr. White was in difficulty which should have been obvious to all staff, no attempt was made to check on Mr. White other than at required rounds. No attempt was made to place Mr. White under special observation. No attempt was made to transfer Mr. White to an outside hospital facility. A doctor was not consulted until Mr. White was found dead at

5:00 o'clock in the morning. The method of removing Mr. White from the range in which he was normally incarcerated to the segregation area is indefensible.

We would appreciate being informed as to whether disciplinary action was taken with regard to specifically the activity of Mr. Quinn, the hospital officer, and Mr. Labuik, the officer in charge, due to their ineffective handling of the problems presented by Mr. White.

F. From the testimony given at the Coroner's inquiry into the death of Larry Edward Hart, it would appear that a possible interpretation which might be placed on the actions of Mr. Kemp and Mr. Lang would be that Mr. Hart threatened suicide to Mr. Lang if he were not returned to the hospital facility and Mr. Lang ignored this threat at the time.

We feel that correctional officers should be alerted to the constant need to respect a suicide threat.

G. The testimony of correctional officer Lang with regard to a previous encounter with Mr. Hart in June of 1972 reflects critically on the methods used to subdue inmates in the Penitentiary. It is inappropriate to the point of being ludicrous that officers of the Penitentiary should subdue an individual who is banging his head against the wall, by striking him on the head with a blackjack.

H. The testimony given in the Napio case by Sgt. Robert Harvey of the R.C.M.P., that Napio was placed in segregation "because he had been misbehaving in the area where he had been previously incarcerated . . . such as setting his mattress on fire and cutting himself up . . .", in the light of the pathologist's description of the cuts and their location, raises serious questions as to whether Napio could have been expected to inflict these injuries upon himself.

The further question then arises as to whether, if proper investigation had taken place at the time that these 'self-inflicted' wounds were discovered, more appropriate

action could have been taken which might possibly have resulted in the saving of Mr. Napio's life.

There was evidence introduced at the coroner's inquest which suggested strongly that Alphonse Napio expected to be murdered. This suggestion was not adequately explored in the course of the coroner's inquiry and is of such significant import, especially since the letter hints of complicity on the part of Penitentiary personnel, that an indepth, ecompletely thorough investigation is indicated.

Our agency has been made aware, through reliable sources, that inmates who were present at the time of the suicides at the Saskatchewan

Penitentiary and have since been transfered to other institutions, have posed questions as to whether the "suicides" were in fact suicides. Some have indicated that they have enidence that they were not. Such questions need to be resolved to serve the best interests of inmates, staff, the Department of the Solicitor General and the public.

We feel that a thorough investigation should be undertaken into the death of Alphonse Napio and that the results of this investigation should be made public.

I. In the death of Garry Gafka, we feel that the question of "previous injuries" did not receive the attention it requires.

We feel that a thorough investigation into the death of Garry Gafka should be initiated.

J. We are extremely disturbed at the slipshod manner in which the coroner's inquest hearing reviewed the death of Garry Gafka.

We feel that the Coroner, D.L. Dalziel, did not adequately perform his function as coroner. We recommend that, in cases where an individual dies within a government institution (mental hospital, hospital, or correctional facility) an independent lawyer should be appointed with the responsibility of directing questions to the witnesses and investigating officer, and a further responsibility of introducing further evidence if such is available.

K. We wonder why Con-Aid was not made use of by the Penitentiary staff in the White case. Our information is that Con-Aid was in operation at that time and it would appear that this would have been an appropriate method of monitoring Mr. White's progress.

L. We wonder at the reluctance of Penitentiary staff to transfer inmates in difficulty to hospital facilities in downtown Prince Albert. In both the White case and the Redhot case, there appears to be eavidence of undue caution in arranging for transfer of the inmate to more appropriate facilities.



Seven guards in the B.C. Penitentiary were recently convicted of assaulting a prisoner while he was in solitary confinement.

The same judge who found them guilty gave them an "absolute discharge". Effectively the whole trial was wiped off the record books.

The judge admitted that prison terms were standard in cases where prisoners attacked guards. But in this case the judge said it was essential for the "public good" that guards (convicted of assault) be able to carry on their duties without any stigma attached to them. The lawyer for the guards said that the use of force is accepted practice in ensuring prison regulations are obeyed.

That is, assault is standard prison procedure, regardless of the law. — Thanks to the Western Voice for this piece.

NOTES AND OTHER CLUTTER

This issue is a bit of a departure for us. We are focussing on some correctional programs which today must be regarded as pies-in-the-sky. The material ranges from an argument that alcoholics would probably be better off if they could learn how to drink rather than not to drink to the grandiose suggestion that an entire community can be structured for rehabilitation purposes.



Our last issue more or less concentrated on the harsher side of life in Millhaven. The "correctional staff" there pretty well confirmed what was said in our articles by virtue of confiscating the magazine before it could be read by Millhaven inmates. Ironically the Millhaven inmates didn't have to read our last issue to know what is going down in there — they were the ones who told us. Moreover, they know that their voices have been carried far outside the Mill', which is what it's really all about anyway. Transition is not an exercise in self-indulgence for it's contributors. "Correctional Staff" at the Mill' would have done better to let the magazine through, and themselves provided us their side of the problems there. Since Transition began we have been prepared to accord staff the same access to our pages as inmates. That staff have used this access rarely is a measure of either their sense of security and strength or their fear. We would not like to think they are indifferent.

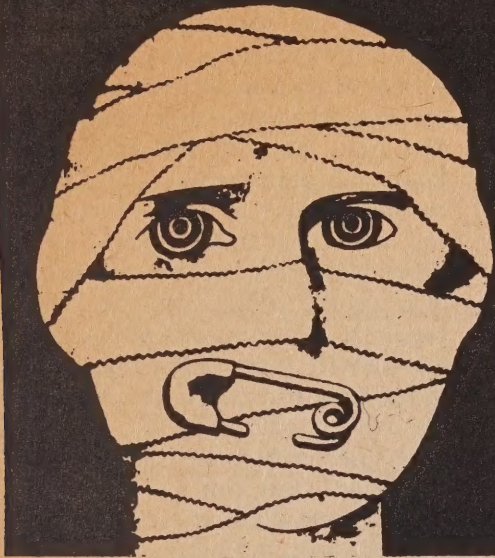
Beginning in March we shall be publishing a monthly newsletter for inmates and ex-inmates self-help groups across the country. The newsletter is primarily designed to share information about the activities and resources of the various groups.

Financing the thing is rather precarious, therefore we ask that any individuals or groups which are outside the self-help sphere, but wish to receive the newsletter, send us two dollars for each subscription they want. Donations would be good too.

Groups around this country are asked to send in material about themselves which they wish to have distributed. Also if you have requests for information about other groups, let us know and we'll try and obtain it for you.

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LOOKING IN OR LOOKING OUT —



HACKSAW

CANADA

Prince Albert added itself to the list of very together joints in the country when inmate solidarity is concerned and considered. In adopting unified action PA inmates join their brothers in Millhaven, New Westminster, Dorchester, and Collins Bay who are beginning to find their strength in numbers and common purpose.

Here is the breakdown on inmate action!

PRINCE ALBERT

March was the main month in PA. Every inmate except 6 refused his supper tray one evening. That night they conducted a peaceful sit-in in the auditorium.

They elected sixteen inmate representatives to present and negotiate various problems with the administration, the guard's union, and selected people from the community including some media people.

The spark appears to have been

petty disciplinary charges by one guard, which culminated in several inmates being put in the Penthouse. From this base, problems for discussion grew rapidly. Conforce became an issue, night yard on weekends was added, and a few more besides.

Inmates returned to their cells around 5:00 a.m., and they were given their regular program — no one was put on lock-up (the usual method for handling such "disturbances"). That evening the inmate reps, the citizens, and the administrators sat down in the visiting area for more talks.

Two significant results were borne: PA, as far as we know, became the first maximum security prison to get night exercise on weekends and holidays — as yet it's only release to the range, but it's a start. The second is even more important. The administration, through Acting Director Jim O'Sullivan, actually bargained in good faith. Reports from inmates and some of the more knowledgeable citizens were unanimous in saying

that candour and concern were the main characteristics of the talks. Where the Acting Director had the authority, he made the decisions; where he didn't, he said so, and often suggested ways to address the particular problem and offered joint support; and when he disagreed he damn well said so and laid out his reasons for assessment by the group.

In all, a helluva step forward — for the cons and for the penitentiary service.

NEW WESTMINSTER

In New West the main issues have been guard brutality and indiscriminate use of isolation. If you didn't know, though we suspect you do, *seven* New West guards were recently found guilty of assaulting *one* inmate. An eighth guard charged in the same case failed to appear in court. The joint case over use of isolation being cruel and inhuman punishment is still in the courts, but the cons who brought the case against the joint have won a lot of

solid public sympathy and support around Vancouver. If they win, the case will mean a great deal right across the country.

MILLHAVEN

In Millhaven the issues are the same as ever. They range through assaults by guards, bigotted local courts, and ludicrous counter-charges by guards. The possibility that the joint must cease tampering with the mails is high on the judicial horizon too because a lot of cons are tired of seeing the skin mags getting in but the political mags being confiscated or delayed until strong protests are lodged. (Probably their reaction to this will be to stop the skin mags too.)

DORCHESTER

Here things are quiet right now, like the lull before an administration-bred storm. As the following report indicates; things are pretty dismal these days:

"I just wanted to give you a little background on what's happening here — nothing! As you no doubt read in the newspapers, we had a sitdown here and, as the headlines read, it was "peaceful". There were certain grievances presented to the specialists out front. The outcome — nothing!

"When I say nothing, I mean nothing constructive — only destructive. None of the grievances were acted upon or corrected. The only things that happened were part of our inmate committee and recreation crew was locked up in segregation, our recreation period was split in half, recreation overtime was completely cut off and cancelled, our committee and equipment rooms in the gym were literally bricked up, our institutional clubs' meetings were cut in half (weekly meetings in the past and now only bi-monthly) the recreation and hobby purchases are at a point where it takes between one month and three to make purchases that can be done daily downtown. There is an overall attitude to cutback or tighten up nearly all aspects of inmate activity or program.

"Oh yes, we're moving in this joint, but it's all backwards and it's a pretty poor state of things. Progressive or regressive — not hard to figure out there. In years past we (cons and maybe even the administration) would look back over a year and make note of what improvements had been made, if any; but now, or especially here, this year, we can only look back and see negative results.

"Yes, maybe we got a few more trinkets to play with or listen to from the point of view of daily living or programs we've really lost.

'75 looks like a bummer. It sure seems ironic when we live in one of the more technologically advanced nations in the world that there is so little advancement in prisons and prison people, or just dealing with the plain old human being."

COLLINS BAY

Cons here have commenced a Canteen Boycott which should be followed through in every prison in the country. Rather than paraphrase it all, below reprinted from the Bay's inmate mag, *the Avatar*, is the why and how of it:

There has been a lot of stir about the Canteen lately. In fact, there has been a lot of talk and a lot of beefs about it for a long, long time. However, until recently nobody has done too much about it. Everyone has known that prices are high and going higher; that pay rates are far too low and have no relation to the amount of work involved on the jobs, school work or vocational training courses done by inmates; that things are getting worse instead of better. Everyone has known this and bitched about it, but nothing has been done, until now that is!

Inmates in this institution are presently engaged in a voluntary boycott of canteen spending. This involves giving up buying anything except tobacco and envelopes from the canteen and only buying these if it is absolutely necessary. This action serves as a symbol of how together the institution is in asking for changes in the pay and canteen situation. It is a good, peaceful way of

showing our unity and our strength at the same time. We are showing that we are serious and willing to go through the hassles of doing without until we can get some favourable action. The boycott is good as a symbol and as a publicity device (we are trying to publicize it now) and also must have an effect on the Regional Stores system as it cuts back on their volume of business steeply and means that they will have surpluses building up in their stores as their regular orders come in. The boycott is an effective way of showing that we mean what we say and a good way to draw attention to the changes that we are asking for.

A brief has been put together and mailed out, along with a letter asking people to help us out and telling them about the boycott. Copies of this brief have been sent to all institutions in the region (the Committee's and the Director's), to the Commissioner, the Regional Director, the Solicitor-General, Inger Hansen, John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, Senator Hastings, the Law Reform Commission, several Members of Parliament, all the major newspapers and many other interested people who we hope can help us in this matter. The brief that we sent out is stuck up on all the institutional bulletin boards, but I'm going to do a short breakdown here of what we said for the benefit of those getting the paper on the outside or those who haven't read it in here.

We spoke of why wages are paid in here (supposedly as an incentive for work and saving for the future) and of how small the actual spending money (at the most it is \$7 per two week pay period) and savings money (\$78. per year at most) are.

We asked for a change to a Commissary and a cash money system of Canteen and pay.

We asked that the minimum wage experiments be hurried up and expanded immediately. Also, we asked that such future plans not be used as a stall to stop immediate improvements from taking place right now.

We asked for an increase in pay for a one year period while new ways and rates of pay are studied. The new

rates would help us fight inflation in our spending money while the increases in savings money would help a man have a chance to save some money for the future or help out his family in some way.

GRADE PORTION	DAILY PAY RATE	SPENDING MONEY	SAVINGS
1	\$1.40	\$.70	\$.70
2	1.60	.80	.80
3	1.80	.90	.90
4	2.00	1.00	1.00

We believe that we have made reasonable requests in a reasonable manner. We have been assured of support for many of our proposals outside the institution and also from the Administration here. How much support we have remains to be seen but I really believe that we are going to get some action on our requests and some changes in the near future. All we can do is give it a try and seek as much support as we can. We need everyone's support if we are going to get any changes and that's all we ask — that everyone stick together and support us in our attempts.

Inmate Committee

CALGARY

The following came to us from Harry McCutcheon in Calgary, Canada's answer to Dallas where facists are concerned. Among other things, Calgary is Eldon Woolliams' home stomping grounds, and everyone doing the book knows who that dude is and what he touts. The Voice of Canada is for real; luckily it's only the Voice of the Canadian Lunatic Fringe, but it's still there — and the day you forget it is the day they get you!

We shoot mad dogs don't we by Harry McCutcheon.

They discussed means by which they might increase the group's membership. Amongst the suggestions made was the one that they invite the official hangman to speak at one of their meetings. Eventually it was decided that a well-

known man in Edmonton, who was a strong advocate of capital punishment would be invited to Calgary to address a future gathering.

Other persons then began to wonder aloud how they might keep the dissidents, the professionals, and the bleeding hearts out of their meetings. It was wrong, they said, for them to have to listen to people who were in favour of abolishing capital punishment and who supported criminal activity. We've been listening to them long enough, declared one man, and the country is now over-run by thieves, murderers and rapists. Other persons present indicated that they were in complete agreement with this kind of thinking. Putting security guards at the door for their next meeting was the solution offered by one member.

This was my first contact with a collection of assorted human beings that called itself the Voice of Canadians. They had gathered in the Belle Aire Room at the Calgary Inn on the evening of January 20, 1975. From the platform their spokesman offered thanks to the hotel management for allowing them free use of the room.

It was an evening I shall long remember. It was the occasion of my first exposure to hard-core fascism at the grass-roots level though I've been involved in politics at all levels for many years. In describing the event I'd have to say it was an incredible, sometimes amusing, but very frightening experience.

They attacked the National Parole Service and the judiciary. They denounced university professors and school teachers. They scoffed at the stand taken by the Solicitor-General of Canada and by the Prime Minister. They ridiculed parliament and city council. They talked about the extermination of all types of people. We shoot mad dogs, don't we, rationalized one middle-aged matron. Another person advocated the arming of housewives and children so they might shoot at noises in the dark even if this meant injuring innocent people. When someone mentioned that Calgary's chief of police didn't believe in capital

punishment the chairman said that didn't matter because Saskatoon's chief of police did.

The chairman sat up on the speaker's platform flanked by two women. He never strayed far from the microphone for any length of time. Though he played a humble, self-effacing role he was very adept at spouting half-truths, mean innuendos, nasty exaggerations, twisted quotations and outrageous falsehoods. His appealing lack of knowledge about Canada's parliament, the judicial system, the penal system, the National Parole Service and the Criminal Code was prominently obvious. He provided no facts or figures on any topic and he offered no expertise of any sort. Why anyone sat to listen to him and take him seriously is beyond my understanding. His audience seemed to do just that however. He gained applause for several of his wildest statements, and as the evening lurched on the utterings made by him and others grew wilder, and emotions became more exposed.

Near the close of the meeting the chairman announced gleefully that support for their cause was increasing in all corners of the country. Chapters were forming in Edmonton and Lethbridge. Letters of encouragement were coming in from all quarters. Various groups were looking toward them to provide speakers for their meetings. The chairman then launched himself into a prolonged, impassioned appeal for financial assistance.

* Does Canada need the Voice of Canadians? Do our law enforcement agencies need the assistance of groups like this? Should they be encouraged to grow and expand? Should they be given funds so they might get louder and more vocal? Perhaps you'd have to hear them before you could answer these questions. I'm almost convinced of one thing, however; Adolph Hitler would have been pleased to have this group on his team.

VANCOUVER

The newspaper wire service recently carried an item originating

in Vancouver which told the world about how Doctors D.J. McCaldon and Bill Marshall at the Regional Medical Center in Kingston are having much success with behaviour modification utilizing aversion therapy.

One of our readers sent us the news clipping with his personal comments scribbled on it like a postscript. He said:

1) "Maybe we got them on their toes,"

2) "Maybe we won if inmates are not being treated badly;

3) "Maybe this is a crock since they are doing their own evaluating and reporting."

Whatever the case, they should get full marks for well presented propaganda.

CANADA

Thanks to Ed Sauve and the Springhill Communicator is this heartwarming item, reprinted for your information:

According to Section 1.41 (1) of the Penitentiary Service Regulations, every officer or employee commits a serious breach of service discipline or a service misdemeanor, as the case may be who:

a) Fails or neglects to take, to the utmost of his ability, appropriate action in the interest of the security of the institution where an inmate —

- i) escapes
- ii) attacks an officer
- iii) attacks another inmate

iv) destroys government property

v) engages in a riot or disturbance

vi) engages in any other serious misconduct likely to endanger life or property, or

vii) attempts to do any of the foregoing;

b) makes a false statement in relation to any matter affecting his appointment or employment;

c) refuses, when a witness in an institutional Court, to answer a question which he may be lawfully required to answer;

d) is absent from duty without leave;

e) is late for duty without reasonable excuse;

f) fraudulently obtains any leave of absence from duty;

g) makes any false representation to obtain anything produced by inmate labour;

h) reports for duty or is on duty while under the influence of alcohol or a drug;

i) is asleep on duty;

j) enters into any relationship not in line of duty or approved by the institutional head with any inmate, ex-inmate or his friends or relatives;

k) without authority gives to or receives from an inmate, either directly or indirectly, any contraband;

l) fails to report to superior authority any contraband found in the possession of an inmate;

m) is negligent, careless or

inefficient in the performance of his duty

n) refuses, neglects to obey any lawful order or instruction of the institutional head or of any superior officer;

o) refuses or neglects to conform to any rule, regulation or standing order of the institution;

p) communicates to an unauthorized person any information concerning the institution or an individual inmate thereof which may adversely affect the administration; discipline or security of the institution;

q) is immoral, intemperate or otherwise conducts himself in a manner that is likely to bring discredit upon the Service;

r) is found guilty of an offence under the Criminal Law of Canada;

s) operates an institutional vehicle in a reckless or careless manner;

t) demands or accepts a gift or any consideration in respect of favoring any firm or person seeking to transact or in the transaction of business relating to the Service;

u) does any other act that is unbecoming a member of the Service; or

v) contravenes any rule or regulation made under the Act.

Also, Section 1.41 (2) says that every officer or employee shall submit himself to be searched in the institution when called upon to do so by or at the direction of the institutional head or his deputy.



THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Bill C-222

"Any attempt by an inmate to resocialize himself or any attempt by the State to resocialize him must be predicated on providing him full access to the instruments of responsible behaviour."

There is a bill presently floating about the House of Commons known as bill C-222. This bill is a private members bill, which distinguishes it from the bills usually passed by the Government because, unlike the Bills usually passed it was not presented by the party in power with the tacit endorsement of the Cabinet but instead was presented by a Member of Parliament from the Opposition and did not even have the tacit endorsement of his own party. For these reasons private member's bills have a poor chance of ever being passed into law. Bill C-222 is no exception to this. It has been presented to Parliament three times, and each time it has been summarily buried by the reigning party in the House. The fate of private bills and, hence, the fate of the minority voice in the House is one of the more glaring inconsistencies in our "democratic" system; but this is outside our topic here. More central to us is Bill C-222 itself, because if passed it would amend the Canada Elections Act to permit prison inmates to vote in Federal Elections.

Three times presented, three times buried — there should be a fourth presentation; there *must* be a fourth presentation! Passage of Bill C-222 or another bill with a similar purpose is more important than many people outside the correctional realm may appreciate, particularly at a time when community-based corrections have come to the fore.

If we said that inmates have the right to vote; rather, inmates *should* have the right to vote, a lot of people would say this is idealistic, philosophical, a dumb truism, a quaint liberal notion as meaningless as the notion of equality before the law. In other words a lot of people would accept the idea that inmates should be allowed to vote because they believe it won't interfere with the status quo anyway. This attitude, if it influenced parliament, would result in passage of the right bill for the wrong reasons, especially when there are other, more vital, reasons.

Certainly one of these is rooted in the absolute control the penitentiary and parole services, and, by extension, the federal government have over the day-to-day lives of inmates and parolees. A part of this is the deadening realization for the inmate that he is totally dependant on the humanity of his captors — a humanity that is questionable in more areas of institution life than it is acceptable. The inmate has no recourse except "moral suasion", which because one needs a strong position to deal from — and the inmate hasn't that — is too often an exercise in wasted time. Opposition members will

sometimes take an inmate's problem into the House of Commons, but this is usually done more to embarrass the Party in Power than to right a wrong or press for implementation of sensible reform.

It can be argued that in this respect the average inmate isn't in a substantially different position than the average citizen. In reality however, he surely is, and, more damaging, he knows it. We should not have to say that it is totally ridiculous to tell a man he must become a responsible citizen and live productively in our society while at the same time deprive him of the most fundamental political instrument of that society, indeed, the instrument which we are told is the cornerstone of our society. This really need not be more emphasized by noting that the government, both the elected bodies and the bureaucracies, exercise far more *direct* control over the inmate and the shape of his life than over any private citizen's or far more even than most private citizens can imagine.

We would argue that to know he has the vote is far more important to an inmate than the actual use of that vote. This, we believe, holds true for a large segment of the general public too. Similarly, to know he does not have it can go far toward having him question, perhaps resentfully, every other promise of the society he is supposed to respect. If he is denied access to the political life of the country, then it is foolish for him to believe he has access to the economic or cultural life of the country. Any attempt by an inmate to resocialize himself or any attempt by the State to resocialize him must be predicated on providing him full access to the instruments of responsible behaviour.

Inmates today are much better educated than those of a generation ago. Many federal inmates are doing time for what they consider to be political crimes — recall, for example, the trade unionists, the FLQ people, and the George Williams people; recall also the many people doing time for what in essence are crimes without victims. All this is to say is that the level of political awareness is much higher among inmates than it was previously. If only for this reason, his feelings about his ineligibility to vote are more intense — to *not* give him the vote is to confirm in his eyes the unjustness of our society.

Ironically, past experiences tend to indicate that inmates who are able to vote usually do so in roughly the percentage and party spread as do most of the electorate. The number of radicals, left or right wing, are neither more nor less than anywhere else. Moreover, there is very little to indicate that inmates would be any more inclined to involve themselves in Bloc voting than would any other group. To be sure, a few years ago, the possibility of inmates bloc voting could conceivably be

seen as a threat by many politicians for a few years ago an inmate population in some penitentiaries could number 500-600 each, a considerable number of votes when seen as a bloc in such areas as Laval, Kingston, Springhill, Dorchester, Drumheller, or Prince Albert — possibly even enough to figure highly in the outcome of an election, either because of its own weight or, more likely, because of the backlash vote in the rest of the riding. However, during the last few years the trend toward smaller institutions has increased to the point many of the older, larger prisons are now somewhat under-populated. And too, two medium security penitentiaries are already beyond the planning stages. The power and potential of bloc voting is so reduced that it is inconsequential. The potency of having the vote as part of his resocializing equipage remains important to the inmate nevertheless. He should have the vote — he must have the vote. As long as he does not have it, the rest of the “big problem” is just so much extravagant B.S.

Fortunately, several major Canadian organizations, which have an interest in corrections, have begun to look seriously at the matter of the inmate vote.

The Canadian Jaycees have already gone on record as supporting such a move. The St. Leonard's, John Howard, and Elizabeth Fry Societies are currently giving the matter serious consideration. The Canadian Criminology and Corrections Association presently has a student from the University of Ottawa's Criminology Dept. studying the “implications of introducing voting to inmates and is examining the experience in other countries”. Should these organizations decide to support the vote for inmates, in concert their authority cannot be taken lightly by government or by the general public. Added to these, as well, may be the support of the Canadian Federation of Civil Liberties and Human Rights Assoc. and the Canadian Labor Congress.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the best strategy for getting inmates the vote is to have the Government (Liberals) introduce a bill themselves. Certainly this would eliminate many of the hassles involved in trying to lobby through a private member's bill, although it may be said that the lobbying (advising?) must be carried out prior to the bill getting onto the floor in the House. Nor, we should add, does getting the Government to put forward the Bill eliminate the possibility that it will get buried in a Committee “for further study”.

One clear point which cannot be ignored is that inmates themselves must express their desire to have the vote. If they are not prepared to do that, to some extent, then the Government would perhaps be justified in saying that inmates don't care, so why bother. And in this case, Government would be right.

There are lots of ways for inmates, as individuals and as groups, to express their feelings. Presently, for example, we have more than a dozen Penal Press Magazines being written in Canada by inmates. Surely their pages would be a fine place for a forum on such an important correctional issue.

Many inmates have developed ties with the public

media too. These ties should not be ignored in bringing the issue before the public and into the eyes of the parliamentarians. Nor should we ignore the age old letters to local Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers. With media exposure, support from major professional organizations and the like, and with individual support, the House may feel obligated to act with perhaps not as much haste as if it was another War Measures Act, but perhaps with a little more than it does with social services programs.

The time for participation in this matter is now; not next week or next year, but now! No one is going to lose his parole because he asks for a vote. Nor is anyone going to get a parole because he has the vote. But everyone who does get a parole may have a slightly better chance of finishing it if he knows that at least one of his important rights as a citizen has been restored to him.

UPDATE:

The St. Leonard's Society and the Elizabeth Fry can now be added to the growing list of corrections organizations which support Bill C-222.

Also recently, the Bill was given another reading in the House of Commons. The debate went just about as might be expected.

Some MP's were concerned that if inmates were given the vote, they would also be eligible to run for office. A few irresponsible remarks were made about how could a con take his seat in the House if he won — if he won he could only win by having the vote of a large proportion of regular voters other than fellow cons, and with that kind of community support a con should not be in the pen anyway. (a fact the MP's failed to consider).

Leggatt, the MP from New Westminster, who waxes eloquent about penal reform occasionally, joined his fellow MP from the Millhaven riding, in being supremely choked about the possibility of an inmate bloc vote being instrumental in defeating him at the polls. Neither seemed to realize that if they truly represented their electorate, such a problem would never occur. Could it be they just don't want to demean themselves by having to hustle votes from dirty ol' convicts? Let us hope not.

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Estimates and Information

Thomas Goodall
Saskatchewan Penitentiary
P.O. Box 160
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I'LL DRINK TO THAT

Alcohol for Inmates

BY AL WHITE

During a recent bull session someone asked if prison inmates should be allowed to drink alcohol while imprisoned. Somebody piped up that if they were they should be allowed sex too — perhaps a good point but not really analogous. After the chuckles died out, the conversation turned serious. Some research into alcoholism literature followed, and the result is this article. For, it appears, the best way to treat an alcoholic for his alcoholism may be to give him another drink.

Alcoholics Anonymous people will probably take that statement lightly. They are of the opinion that a person must be a total abstainer if he is to beat an alcohol problem. Their view is shared by a great many people working in alcohol rehabilitation programs including medical people who have themselves "beaten" booze problems. Mostly total abstinence is regarded as the only measure of recovery from booze.

However there are some different opinions beginning to be heard in professional circles. Not so long ago a writer in a thing put out by the U.S. Institute of Medical Health wrote:

"Recently, some leading therapists have been using a different basis for measurement — rehabilitation — in which success is considered achieved when the patient maintains or re-establishes a good family life and work record, and a respectable position in the community, and is able to control his drinking *most of the time*."

Something which strikes us as interesting is the similarity between ex-cons who go back to crime and alcoholics who fall off the wagon. The alcoholic is judged a total failure if he fails to totally abstain, the ex-con is judged a total failure if he is returned to prison. Despite these judgements, both may have succeeded *in part* in improving their personal life situations. Just as abstinence "may not necessarily indicate an improvement in overall health or total life adjustment", controlled drinking may not necessarily indicate no improvement in overall health or total life adjustment. Dr. Bruno Cormier, an acknowledged expert in "forensic criminology" — if there is such a term — years ago, commented that recidivism is a ridiculous measure of a man's success of failure when it is the sole measure. Returning to prison may not mean a man has failed to improve; perhaps he'd been able to hold a job for a year — for the first time in his life — but screwed up because of family problems.

Just as there are those who say once a criminal, always a criminal, there are many who say once an alcoholic always an alcoholic. But recently where criminals are concerned there are those who say that crime may be more rooted in one's social environment than in one's head — and even more recently, there are those who say alcohol abuse may be more rooted in one's social environment than in one's body or mind. This is the view that alcoholism, like crime, may often be learned behaviour.

Abuse of alcohol, and logically, reasonable use of alcohol has been related by one professional to what he terms total life health: drinking habits, emotional stability, vocational skills, interpersonal relations, and physical well being. Some of the things emerging in alcoholism research tend to support this view. For example people who are employed are more likely to change their drinking habits than are those who are unemployed. The same holds for those who had fairly stable family lives as opposed to those who are having marital problems and so on. Nor did the new drinking habits simply mean not drinking at all. For many the new habits were to drink less, and in effect, drink for different reasons.

The best way to treat an alcoholic for his problem may be to give him another drink

A few alcohol rehabilitation programs have got away from trying so singularly to keep problem people dry. Instead they concentrate on helping the people strengthen things like their job situation, family situation or perhaps the way the people use their leisure time.

A couple of studies indicate that there is a high correlation between the amount of alcoholism and the amount of environmental deprivation. What this means in simple language is that the more screwed up your life is in the first place, the more likely you are to drink. Probably many people would suggest that it was the booze that screwed up your life in the first place, but this simply implies that the booze must have been a problem from the very first drink. Undoubtedly alcohol use could speed up

the deterioration but it nevertheless needs something to work on in the first place. In other words, alcohol abuse is more often the *effect* of other things rather than the *cause* of other things.

If there is one inescapable fact that we must all contend with it is that drinking is a normal social role. We must learn how to drink (not how not to drink) as surely as we must learn how to act in a church or a court room. The effects of the social atmosphere on drinking is probably as crucial as the effects of the drink on one's behaviour. For many people the bar is a supportive environment. For many people the bar is where their friends are, or the bar may be an excellent place to discuss business, or the bar may be the only alternative to a single room in an inhospitable rooming house, or it may be a good place to try and forget that one's welfare cheque will finance a two-day drunk but won't pay the rent and buy food for one's children for a month. Particularly for the average ex-con the bar is a congenial place because more often than not he knows no one other than people who spend a lot of time in the bars, nor does he have access during the immediate post-release period, to recreational activities which do not treat alcohol as the center around which all else revolves.

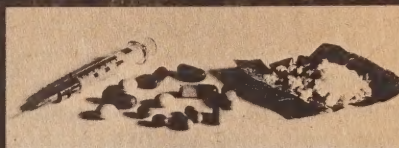
In themselves, there is nothing wrong with alcohol or with the bars. The problem is how they are used.

As alcohol rehabilitation programs go, not much has been attempted using the potentials of what is usually called milieu management. Nor, for that matter, has much been done generally about what the Le Dain Commission calls our biggest drug problem — booze. By generally I mean programmes aimed straight at the general public. When we think of people with alcohol problems, the picture of a skid-row wino flashes into our mind. In the big picture, however, he is in a small minority among those who have alcohol problems. As for the treatment programs, you just about have to don the tainted label of alcoholic and go into a hospital rehab or detoxification center before anything is available.

The AWARE program doesn't say
"Stop drinking" all it says is
"Smarten Up"

Notable as one of the few public education programs on alcohol which is systematic, thought-provoking, and, we suspect, effective, is the Saskatchewan government's AWARE program. Basically, it's a very polished advertising campaign. Other government departments around the country have had a whack at the same sort of thing but the campaigns are usually just one-shot blurbs that can't achieve much simply because the public's exposure to them isn't enough to make much impression. The AWARE program doesn't say "Stop Drinking" all it says is "Smarten Up". We think this suggestion may be the most realistic approach to alcohol problems that there is.

If these things
kind of scare you,



isn't it great you feel at home
with these?



Perhaps it's a case of the drug you know is better than the drug you don't know. That's normal. But how much do you really know about alcohol?

One of the first things to acknowledge is that alcohol is a drug. As such, it can produce physical and emotional changes in you. And you could get to depend on it — either physically or emotionally.

Alcohol is a "downer".

Although it's usually thought of as a stimulant because of the way it warms up the party, alcohol is really a mind-depressing drug. This means it numbs your mind to the realities around you. It can also surface emotions you may have been keeping under wraps.

If there's a neighbour who bugs you, a client you hate, or someone you'd like to take a poke at, you might state all of these things after one or two rounds of drinks. The same thing goes for romantic intentions. Once alcohol lets the lid off things, you may do and say a lot of things you'll wish you hadn't.

It doesn't stop there.

Alcohol also slows your judgement, slurs your speech and makes fast action virtually impossible.

Of course, it's one drug that's legal. So whether or not you drink is strictly up to you. All we ask is that you think about it. That way you can always be in control. Whether you're having a glass of wine or a drink at a party. Or just enjoying a quiet beer at home.

Alcohol. Give it some thought.

aware

The Saskatchewan Department of Health

Probably there are lots of reasons why this approach isn't used more. It's been suggested "that many people who work in the field are alcoholics themselves, are compelled to remain abstinent, and may not be able to accept the idea that others can recover and drink socially." Yet, if abstinence is such a big deal, howcum in Japan and Holland drugs are available which cause reactions like anabuse does, yet permit moderate but not excessive drinking.

It is currently a sad fact that alcohol rehabilitation has become as institutionalized as the liquor lobby in Ottawa.

A major reason why social cures are ignored while abstinence cures are emphasized can be related to the increased need for social support services like vocational training, intensive psychotherapy, family counselling,

employer counselling, and so on as the individual case may be. It is currently a sad fact that alcohol rehabilitation has become as institutionalized as the liquor lobby in Ottawa. A result of this is the blanket treatment programs; they are cheaper, easier to operate efficiently, easier to gather statistics about, and easier to train people to work in.

Blanket alcohol rehab programs are comparable to blanket corrections programs; in actuality they serve only a small percentage of those subjected to them. Abstinence programs, most of which rely heavily on the AA formats reach very few people. For example in the United States it has been estimated there are "approximately nine million alcoholic and problem drinkers, yet there are only 300,000 members in AA."

Obviously abstinence is not a cure-all, except insofar as it would leave the individual sober enough to work on whatever problems may have gotten him drinking in the first place, presumably. Such is not often the case. On the other hand, there is some indication that if therapists and the like concentrate on providing "social cures",



PENCIL CORDS GRAPHICS

The Vanilla Drinkers

that is, work on the problems rather than on their effects, the people adjust a lot better than the ones who are given anabuse implants or are otherwise convinced to abstain.

The advocates of controlled drinking are growing in sufficient numbers and scientific authority that corrections people should begin looking very hard at the potentials of new programs for their prisons and jails. There are documented studies available which show that some alcoholic persons can be treated through conditioning for controlled drinking. Nor does such conditioning have to be along the crude lines of the electric

prod behavior mod school of sadistic humanitarianism. It can be as simple as using reason — the boozers' ability to reason (boozers too, are people, so why not?) — such as therapists drinking with his clients in order to demonstrate moderate social drinking. Actually, in a couple of programs outside Canada this is already being done rather successfully.

Corrections people tell us the majority of inmates have alcohol problems. If so, and frankly I don't believe it is, then perhaps corrections people better start giving inmates a few alternatives in programs so that they (the inmates) can do something about it.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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Words from Inside

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"Words From Inside" is published each year by the Prison Arts Foundation, a national charitable organization established to promote creative activity in Canadian prisons, and to provide educational and rehabilitative opportunities.

"Words From Inside" '74 can be ordered from the Prison Arts Foundation, 143 Fifth Avenue, Brantford, Ontario, for \$2.00 a copy, including mailing costs. Two earlier issues, '73 and '72, are also available at \$1.35 each.

SELF — HELP ON A GRAND SCALE

— or “why not?” in a world of “whys” —

BY ART MONTAGUE

Before our time but really not so very long ago a fashionable way for a righteous community to remove undesirables from its midst was to transport them. Britain transported its to Australia, France and Holland transported theirs to the Indies and South America. The presumption was that the undesirables would either learn to live in accord with one another or kill each other off. In either case, they were far-removed from the up-standing citizenry and were far less a tax burden than if they were filling prisons, asylums and poorhouses in the homeland. As it happened, those who were transported did learn to live in accord with one another. And they did more. They developed the Australian Continent and their offspring turned out to be very peaceable, forthright folk. Their politicians are, of course, as imperialistic as those in any Western Country but this is beside the point.

The idea of transporting convicts has survived for many years. There are still murmurs about using convicts to open up our North, much in the way the Russians opened Siberia. On a diminished scale, there have been suggestions that convicts or, rather, parolees be enlisted to develop wilderness cattle ranches or farms. These in effect would be communities of convicts. In British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec such farms already exist. They are operated almost like communes, and they are thriving. What's interesting is “these pockets of ex-offenders” get along very well with the community around them. There are some very important lessons in these experiences for the people involved in the development of community-based correctional programs, and there are some very important lessons for the general public too, which too often believes it can exist in a community without participation on an individual basis in that community.

In Saskatchewan nearly two years ago a somewhat more ambitious project than a simple farm received a fair amount of attention from some government people and a small group of ex-cons. The official name of the project was the Cutbank Satellite Community Corrections Program.

During the summer of 1973 the group of ex-cons worked in the Cutbank, Saskatchewan area at studying the feasibility of establishing what would have amounted to a self-sufficient model community for sixty to one hundred other ex-cons which would draw extensively on the existing community resources in Cutbank.

Crucial to any program such as this is the development of an economic base — such a program cannot function solely on the basis of government grants, if only because most grants which would provide the kind of money necessary are usually only available for economic development programs. The Cutbank group concentrated on the possibility of establishing a cattle feed lot as a source of core funding. Relatively unexplored were peripheral possibilities to augment this in terms of diversity of occupation, such as carpentry, auto mechanics, painting, food services; indeed, almost the whole range of secondary commercial activity.

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The study and its rhetoric developed very quickly; perhaps too quickly, because by summer's end the project was ready to be buried in the file for "Utopias and Other Dreams (Nightmares?)". Reasons for the failure are unclear but certainly one of them was the failure to develop the close co-operation and support of the Cutbank community.

For whatever other purpose it may have served, the study pointed out some of the problems which any group will have to overcome to develop anything along similar lines.

Within the framework of solving some of these problems, we would like to offer an idea — only an idea, at present, on which we'd like some feedback from our readers.

Several questions must be answered before even initial steps can be taken to impliment any type of program as complex (or more complex) than Cutbank:

- 1) What group or groups of people is the project designed to serve, directly or indirectly?
- 2) What would be a preferred community in which to introduce such a program?
- 3) What would provide the economic base for such a program, would it need to be labor or capital intensive; in the long term could it provide a tax base sufficient to contribute towards further development of the community?

In answer to the first question a great deal can be said. Foremost among people such a project could serve would be those who live and work in the selected community. There is quite a difference between those people who would come to such a community for whatever period of time it may take them to adjust after the prison experience, and those people who would come to such a community to live and work permanently. Bluntly put, the latter would have a stake in the community and the former would have a rest stop on the way to somewhere else. For our grand idea we would opt initially for the latter.

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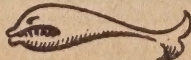
Novelty-minded families these days are suckers for our line of specially bred midget piranhas, the carnivorous South American terror fish. Put 'em in the tub, sink, what-have-you, and start writing up orders. No bulky samples to lug—a whole school of midget piranhas fits easily in pocket or fedora. Write now, valuable franchises still open in many areas!



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Another aspect of the grand idea is to open the community to so-called disadvantaged; the ex-cons, the welfare poor, the mentally retarded, the physically handicapped, the chronic alcoholics — name the labels; — but all have two things in common — all are people

and all have some skills which very likely they have never or rarely had an opportunity to use. It is these people who will be directly served by this project.

"Who Says You Can't Fly?"



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Also directly served will be the people presently living in the chosen community particularly if this project developed in Saskatchewan. Almost everyone knows that many of Saskatchewan's rural communities are in serious danger of being wiped out. For example there is one town that comes to mind immediately. Thirty years ago its population was almost 1000, today its population is barely 200. The town had two schools; now it has none. It had two banks, an impliment store, a few government offices, several dry goods and grocery stores, a restaurant and a gas station. Today the town has a tiny grocery store which doubles as a post-office, and a tiny hotel which sports a pub that very few people frequent. Everything else has closed up. Some of the commercial buildings have fallen down, some of them are just boarded up waiting for God knows what (maybe). The 200 people — the school children who travel 20 miles to school, working parents who commute to neighboring towns to work, and a large number of elderly people who still remember the town as it was and wonder how it can be rejuvenated. The two grain elevators are still used by local farmers, heavy traffic still rolls over the main highway which skirts the town — and all the people get to see as they pass are streets empty but for dust and greying boarded-up buildings and houses. All this is only fifty miles from Saskatchewan's second largest city, and, we daresay, it is a situation several dozen little towns can claim. For purposes of this program such a town may be considered ideal.

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There is housing already available, and it is cheaply priced. There are commerical buildings already available. There is close proximity to markets for goods and there are good transportation lines to these markets. There is a large segment of the present population which would appreciate and participate in the re-building of the community.

We are talking about something more than repopulating a town site. Nor is this a case of grafting a hundred people and a factory on an existing town. We are talking about integrating the program into the community and have it grow together with the community in such a way that the two are indistinguishable — because they are one thing. We are talking about the kind of commitment that would probably take ten years to fulfill.

Obviously, this is more than creation of a bigger, freer prison, despite Senator Earl Hastings often repeated remark that "all the world's a prison." Rather, we are talking about people participating in the kinds of opportunities and satisfactions they are generally denied for no other reason than having access to them denied.

The political form of the community does not have to be socialist or cooperative or, for that matter, fascist. It could function as a participatory democracy, perhaps even close to the ideals of a participatory democracy. Over time a cooperative structure would probably be the best, but it must leave room for free enterprise, if only to ensure a place for people who are often criminal because criminality is almost the only independent activity available for people who haven't the money or the knowledge to start their own small business. It was no lie or empty comment when a criminologist observed that veteran property offenders are the last of the small entrepreneurs, for in a society of monster corporations and colossal bureaucracies this, unfortunately, is often the case.

A key reason for the decline of Saskatchewan's small towns is the lack of an economic base. If property values are low, property taxes must be low. If the businesses are doing poorly they cannot be taxed either. Without tax revenues there is nothing to pay for schools or teachers, for medical facilities or libraries or upkeep of recreational facilities. Pensioners cannot pay high taxes. Nor can commuters who usually commute because their wages are too low to live in larger centers and because there are no jobs available where they are living. School children, when they graduate, move away from the small towns because they see more opportunity elsewhere.

Jobs — a variety of jobs — with decent wages and reasonable opportunity for advancement must be available on the spot. Moreover, such jobs must provide the kind of security that comes with knowing the business won't fold up in five or ten or twenty years.

Looking at the Saskatchewan scene in this respect is damn encouraging.

Like Quebec, the Maritimes and British Columbia, Saskatchewan is being exploited for its non-renewable or non-readily renewable resources — potash, pulp wood, energy, grain, to name a few — and these are being shipped now to markets outside the province. There is strong reason to suppose secondary process industries can be developed inside Saskatchewan in order that finished or semi-finished goods can be shipped to markets. Why, for example, sell raw materials to an outfit in Toronto then have to purchase the finished goods from them at ridiculously higher prices than if the goods were made here? On the same note, why should foreign or non-

Saskatchewan money be necessary to develop and, incidentally, retain ownership of such secondary industries as are developed? There is no need for either of these things to be happening — yet, they are happening.

Development money is available. So are the experts who will be needed to help put it all together. Most of both, we should add, are not going to be found in the correctional field. Indeed, the correctional functions this project will serve probably won't require any correctional people at all — they too suffer from the "label problem" which often touts them as what they are not. Given the opportunity to find his own unique place in the community will do for many individuals what an army of "correctors" (are and will be) unable to do.

Several years will pass before community-based corrections are understood by the general public, but during those years much will be done to implement small community-based corrections programs. The one outlined here is not small, in terms of money, people or benefits. But it is for people who are unable or who refuse to buy the big urban promise — the empty promise that leaves too many wondering where their dignity, their human-ness, and their lives went. We are not talking about isolating the community from the mainstream. What we are talking about is entering the mainstream on terms acceptable to us, terms which until now the mainstream has chosen not to negotiate or even acknowledge.

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 Secret formula found by famous professor
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BOOKS IN BRIEF

reviews and commentary

The Sin Sniper by Hugh Garner (Simon & Shuster, 1970, 95 cents, pb)

This is the sort of book you read in the joint on a Sunday night when you've read everything else in your cell but you still can't sleep. It's the sort of book that could become instantly popular in the joint, passed rapidly from con to con until it's too dog-eared and tattered to survive another reader.

The Sin Sniper is a rare kind of mystery novel. Its value, apart from entertainment, is in Garner's descriptions of the story's setting and the people who populate the area.

In his postscript he has this to say:

"The locale of this book is an indefinable area of downtown Toronto known to policemen, politicians, parole officers, social workers and health authorities as Moss Park. The transient roomers, whores, junkies, winos, pensioners, and welfare recipients don't call it anything in particular.

The book covers the lives of some of these people for a week in the spring of 1965.

"Things in Moss Park have hardly changed at all during the ensuing years. They've torn down some of the older cockroach farms to prevent them from falling down, changed a few demolition scars into parking lots, and built or added to a handful of commercial properties.

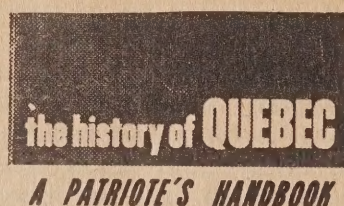
"The denizens of Moss Park have changed too, but not that you'd notice. The individuals are in constant flux, but the people remain the same from year to year, if you know what I mean."

The story is about a bug who runs around Toronto shooting hookers on the street. The setting alone makes it fascinating reading for anyone who knows Toronto, but it's

Garner's writing ability that makes the book exceptional.

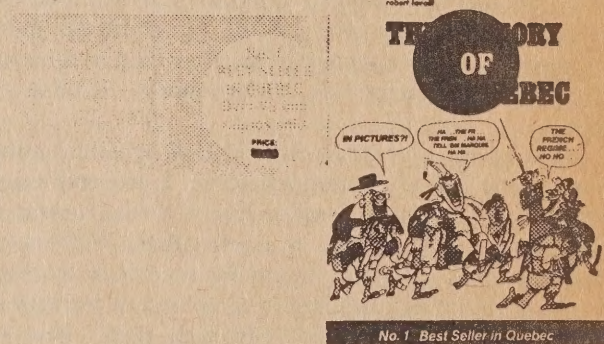
Hugh Garner is one of Canada's best writers. He's no Harold Robbins and he's no Mickey Spillane. His work, however, is solid and sharp. The violence is as real as the street and in the context of the street it is valid. There is a contrast to the Robbins and Spillane styles which depend for impact on the far-fetched and the brutal. Even violence and insanity should have some dignity; Garner gives them this.

The Sin Sniper is not the Jonathan Livingstone Seagull of the Slums, but it is at least as entertaining.



by Léandre Bergeron

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The Memoirs of

SLOW GEORGE

Here I am, here I am, like a glittering star bounding onto the dramatic stage of your life! good old me, Slow George, famed fabled favored straight man to all the ill humours of this rat-hole that rat-hole and any other rat-hole into which this magazine when bent stapled and mutilated can be jammed like the callused forefinger of an old dad into a . . . readers are not interested in the sordidness surrounding we / them / everyone . . . and some dudes would be offended by analogies to their sexual proclivities. There is a movement afoot in this land for people to declare themselves . . . presuming that when they do everyone else must thereby be compelled to . . . well, I got knews for you honest folk; you go first, cuz there are some who never go at all . . . and oddly enough these are the ones who are already far gone. For instance, has the Solicitor General's Component of the Public Service Union got a Gay Lib chapter. Has the Post Men, has those clean sweet white school teachers on indian reserves got one. Slow George, that's me, my wisdom rises to the fore and is spread like manna on the masses and manure on the stable floor — to get rid of the closets doesn't necessarily get rid of the skeletons, and where there are kings and queens there are always those who would depose them.

Of late, dear readers, you lowly souls who have nothing else to read because some puke razored the pictures out of your Penthouse, from you has come to me accusations of by-passing this opportunity to dispense — like a Doctor — my pers of wisdom (?) not before swine I hasten to add, because the guys are picky about who reads the magazine) and instead of my vacuous, or is it acuitous wisdom you are getting the rambling, the whining, the snivelling, and the woe of a George who is truly Slow.

All you readers know I have a little business trip happening here. I figger everybody needs something for his old age besides wrinkles and rheumatism. So I peddle T-shirts with my picture on them and I peddle autographed photos and Dayglo posters of myself — I am famous, you know, and that makes me as marketable as even those sexpot movie actresses like Greta Garbo, Helen Hayes, Jeanette McDonald, and Hedy Lamarr. Business is so good I gotta get a rubber stamp signature for my autograph because I've got writer's cramp. And what happens?

The Man comes down on me with, "Slow George, you're breaking the rules: you aren't allowed to run a business from your cell, and so I'm going to be the trustee of your business just like it says I should in the Sacred Book of Directives." Well, I wisely think, that's pretty groovy cuz now I get the profits and he does the work.

Oh woe, oh goddamn woe . . . it turns out he knows shit about running a business and I start losing money. He just shrugs and says I gotta cum up with more bread for advertising. He lays on the trip about how he is used to working with an unlimited budget and how spending the money is his business, not getting returns for his spending, and since he's so good at spending it, I shouldn't badmouth him cuz he's actually being a success. "Would I be The Man if I wasn't a success?"

So, I say, make more effort to get some returns; and he says, nope, not unless he gets a kickback to take a correspondence course in Small Business Methods. I tell him that since he already has a certificate for a Defensive Driving Course, he's already over-educated — I mean, hell, he doesn't have to deliver the orders, just sell them.

What did I do? I did just what every con with a legitimate complaint does; I wrote to the ombudslady, figgering naturally that she'll get this dude to clean up his act. I laid the whole sad tale on her.

Back comes this letter, saying, Mr. Slow, your problem is *premature*. Well I dunno what that means, but I wait nine months anyway and I write again.

And in comes this reply saying, *no jurisdiction*. Now I'm getting a bit freaked. So I writes again and says that I realize she ain't no midwife or a nurse but I'm losing my shirt trying to keep my baby business alive and could she see her way clear to laying on a little tender loving care — preferably across the head of The Man.

She's as fast with an answer as The Man is loose with my coin. She says she is *unable to help* and I should seek legal remedy.



Great; I call my lawyer and he says I can't start a civil suit without The Man's permission. I write and tell her this. She must be getting frustrated by this time. She says she is personally sympathetic to my problem but is forced to close the file, marking it *information given*.

I am dazzled; this letter-writing is getting to be more time-consuming than the business ever was. So many letters back and forth I'm starting to lose interest in enjoying my bit. Time's going too fast! In my next letter I send a copy of a Cease and Desist Writ against The Man and the government, just to let her know how far I'll go.

She writes back and says my writ is *not justified*.

I tell her I'm filing it anyway, just so I can go to court and mouth off publicly about the screwing I'm taking.

No answer comes for a while, but I figger since I've played my last ace, and since the ombud trip is partly a government ploy to keep their embarrassments out of the courtroom, she's got to call it.

Eureka!! In comes this fine letter saying how she's conferred with all the Grand Powers and has been authorized to buy my T-shirt and poster business and make them into a Crown Corporation!

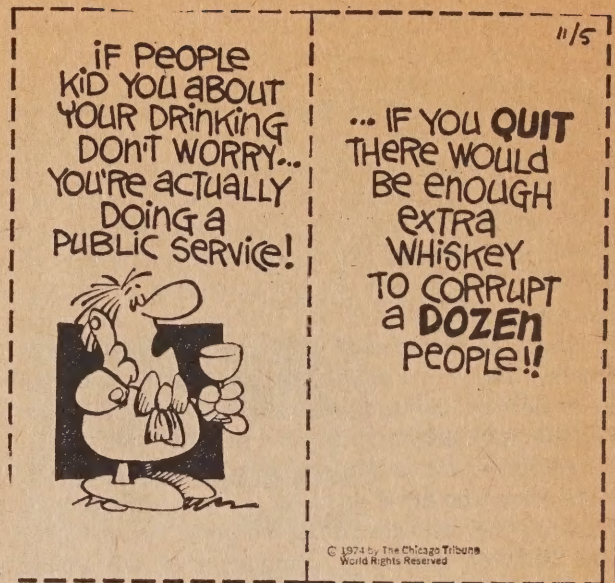
Well, I laughed all the way to the bank . . . cuz I really wasn't losing money in the first place. My inventory was padded and my original sales figures were inflated, you see, and The Man didn't know how to do an audit (and anyway the cons in Shop Accounts had a piece of the action).

That's one of the ways yours truly, Slow George, carries out his Correctional Program in Applied Wisdom and Seering (Searing?) (Shearing?) 212A.

Now I'll lay the kicker on you (this is for the 313 Level class); the thing that separates the wise like me from the run-of-the-mill cunning.

I use the bread they pay me to start two new gaffs . . . er, business ventures.

GREETING CARDS!!



Starting right now, all you readers, you've got a chance to win Big Money (\$12.50 First Prize) in the all-new Draw Slow George Contest. All you have to do to enter is draw me and send the picture with two covers from staff copies of Transition and \$5.00 to me, Slick Slow George, care of Transition. Winner will be announced in the immediate Eventually. Remember: no cheques, money orders, credit card accounts, or other negotiable instruments other than cash unless sender is prepared to have them discounted at 20 percent of face value (in other words, it'll cost you face value of \$25 to get real value of \$5.)

My second Super Offering is Slow George Xmas cards which has for a picture, ME in a Santa suit. Send them to all your friends and loved ones. Order Now, cuz they'll be slow in coming (anything to do with someone as old as me is slow in coming) — and, also I figger the government will buy me out before Xmas anyway, so your orders might get lost if you wait too long.

That's all for this issue, you loyal readers, and in closing here are my words of wisdom:

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Realize
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California Earthquake Institute, Fresno, Calif.

MR. AND MRS. SOCIETY

BY: RALPH HILLINGER

I received your letter the other day dated the 23rd of January and since I am a naturally polite (and of course paranoid as you suggested) person I figured that I may as well give you a reply since I have a few spare minutes.

It seems like I made a bad mistake in telling you about my personal life as you seem to be under the impression that I am looking for sympathy, which is the furthest thing from my mind. I do not need anyone's shoulder to cry on (and never will) because in all reality, I need no one. If you are looking for someone to pity and help, try one of these kids up here that need what you have to offer as I sure as hell don't. You want to help people I am sure, so why don't you try to help some of the kids in here because they will certainly appreciate it. Save your pity for them and *your* God will give you your just reward when the time comes. I am sick and tired of listening to all you preachers and do-gooders as it is I who has to see these kids every day with that so obvious pain in their eyes. You see nothing but what you want to see and you don't see the things they are trying to hide from you, the hurt and sorrow, the pain of being taken away from those they love outside, the sadness! You don't hear the cries of torment as I do when it is late in the evening, the cries that come from their cells after the lights are out. You people preach and go to your meetings outside and attempt to help those who don't really need the help the way the kids in here do, but since you come up here once a month you figure you are doing your duty to God and country.

You mentioned in your letter that you are trying to get others involved in visiting prisons and writing convicts! I have been trying to do this for years but look where I stand now, nowhere, as people are just not interested in this type of work as it can get too involving, and these days, who the hell wants to get involved? Let these kids come to me with their



problems as I can help them, like hell I can help young kids as I am too bitter myself to do these kids any good, but I damn well try as they have nobody else.

It is a great feeling to come up here once a month and sing for these kids, isn't it, but it is also a nicer feeling to leave after three (3) hours and go home. But where do all these kids go after you leave? You know damn well they go back to their cells and wish they could have left with you, you goddamn gracious people who would never in a million years take a convict into your homes as he is a vicious criminal, according to society. No, you would not take a convict in your beautiful homes as he may still be bad. No, I don't expect you to keep a convict in your beautiful home as your duty is finished after you leave here, for another month.

You are probably saying to yourself that I am only feeling bad and this is not the same Ralph you know writing this letter! Lady, it is the same Ralph writing and I am damn tired of keeping these things locked up within myself as I am the one who has to see these kids bodies being carried out after they commit suicide. You don't see these things,

but I do. Sure, you read about it *sometimes* in the papers and *maybe* it brings you to the point of tears, but you soon forget it as it does not effect you personally. It damn well effects me as these kids are not strong enough to take it and they miss what you people have and are so afraid of sharing. A little bit of *LOVE* and a *REAL* home life that many of your group have but are not willing to share. Visit the criminals once a month and sing for them, but keep them out of your homes as they may contaminate your beautiful places and children.

Lady, I can read a hell of a lot of your minds but you just don't realize it. I do not condemn you yourself as I am not certain (yet) that you are the same way as these people I am talking about so do not take this personal because it is not meant to be. But it is *ALL* of society that has to suffer when these kids leave here full of bitterness and hate because nobody dared show a little bit of *LOVE* and *KINDNESS* towards them while they were locked up. You are probably asking yourself what you have done to deserve a letter like this from me so I am going to tell you! You have not done a goddamn thing and this is what I am getting at. You do nothing and this is my point, for God sake, do something before these kids leave here and it is too late. You can help if you really want, but do you *REALLY* want to help? That is the question!

It is such a rewarding ministry to work with students, you said! Why is it such a damn rewarding ministry to work with students and not with convicts? Is it because you can trust them and they need you more than the kids up here? They have very deep problems, I remember you mentioned! Yes, I can imagine their problems are terrible so by all means help them first and don't think about the kid up here that has a tiny problem, such a small problem that it forces him to commit suicide because he has nobody to talk to that can help him. Tell me more about your damn

students and their petty problems. Are they so afraid that they will not get passing grades? Now isn't this just simply terrible! You have a good listening ear and a better listening eye! Now, Mr. & Mrs. Society, why don't you have a helping hand to go along with these qualities? With maybe a LOVING heart as this could help. It would help a hell of a lot more than you are trying to admit to yourself. Try it sometime and maybe someday in the future you can write me back and let me know how it feels.

The time to take these kids in is when they finish their first bit (sentence) because after that it is useless. Get them now, before it is too late and there is no hope left. The problem with people outside is that these kids mean nothing to them so they don't really care, do they? If these kids (to me they are kids) belonged to you I am certain that you would do all in your power to help them, but then again, I am not so sure as a hell of a lot of parents have already given up on their kids in here, but then again, that is their problem, not yours, you say! Mr. and Mrs. Society, it becomes YOUR problem when one of these kids leave here and in the future years hurts one of YOUR family. Don't ever think it cannot happen as it does. You read it every day in the paper where a mother says, "Why, I don't even know the boy so why did he harm my husband, daughter, son, etc. etc.

Why did he kill one of my family for no reason?" Nobody thinks, nobody cares, nobody loves, and so the kid that left here has *NOBODY* goes out and kills *ANYBODY* that happens to get in his way. But if you are lucky, this same kid will commit suicide because he has *NOBODY* and this could be the greatest thing that could happen (for society) because then he cannot hurt *ANYBODY*, and if *ALL* the kids in here done this, there would be no real problem, would there?

Your child responds to all sort of things you said! Well, Mr. and Mrs. Society, these kids respond to the same things even though you don't seem to know, and quite possibly, do not care? They respond to *KIND-*



NESS and *LOVE* which all too many of you are *NOT* willing to share. All people respond to these basic things but where are they going to receive them? Not outside or else they would not be here in the first place, would they? But if they were shown a little of these basic things while inside, the odds are highly in their favour that they would not return to prison. Just a little *TENDERNESS* and somewhere to go when they leave here is all they need, but who is going to give them these things? Your

God, who said, "come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest", is he going to come down and give these kids all this when they leave here? Go ahead and answer me, after all, you seem to have the answer to the students' great problems and their lives are more important to you than these kids.

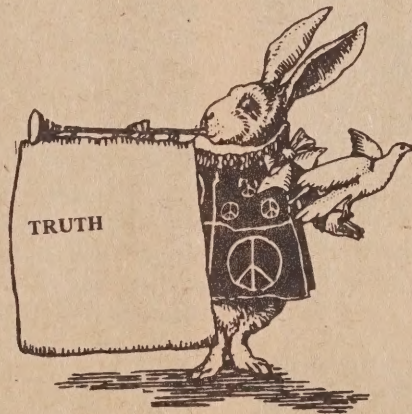
"Would any father give his a stone if he asks for bread?" Do you help these kids even though you cannot hear their cries? Do I, a mere criminal, have to tell you to listen to their cries, don't you decent people outside hear them, or is it that you just do not listen, or possibly you just do not *WANT* to hear? Yes, Mr. and Mrs. Society, I too can quote the Bible, but I can also quote things like, "My God, I am bleeding to death, please help me, I don't want to die, I want to live", and, "There is nothing left for me as nobody cares if I live or die", or maybe this one which I have heard so very often, "I didn't really mean to cut myself so deeply, all I wanted was a little attention", but by the time they got the kid to the hospital, he was already dead.

You read in the newspapers sometimes and I bet I can quote some of your remarks after you read that a twenty year old kid hung himself. You said, "He was so very young and had so much to live for, why did he do it? "He had what? Your goddamn sympathy *AFTER* he killed himself, why didn't he have your sympathy *BEFORE* he killed himself? In a way, he did not kill himself, but *YOUR* society killed him, you people don't look at it this way, do you, as it is too frightening to imagine *YOU* had a part in this cold blooded murder, and cold blooded murder is exactly what it was, and *YOUR* sanctimonious society committed it. Yes, Mr. and Mrs. Society, it is one hell of a bitter pill to swallow but it is the truth!

There are many people outside who *PROFESS* to be Christians (?), but are they really? Or can it be they are just exploiting the convict like so many are these days? Some of you self-professed *CHRISTIANS* visit the convict on a personal basis, but are



you really doing this in the true form of friendship, or is it you are just trying to insure yourself a place in heaven? Yes, it is not difficult for someone such as I to imagine what your prayers sound like at night when you are praying to YOUR God. Could you possibly be saying, "God, I was up at the penitentiary today and I brought a little joy into one of the convict's lives. You know God, I am doing what the Bible says so I am expecting my reward when my time comes." Do you honestly believe that this is what YOUR God wants from you? You generous people who come up here very late in the day so you will not have to suffer more than an hour with the convict, whom you have the nerve to call friend! Now, don't you dare come up early as you have more important things to do, and don't forget your CHRISTIAN friends outside whom you must also see, after all, they ARE CHRISTIANS and you possibly only see them five or six times already, and surely they must come first! The kid you see up here should be satisfied with the half-hour, or hour that you so graciously bestow upon him



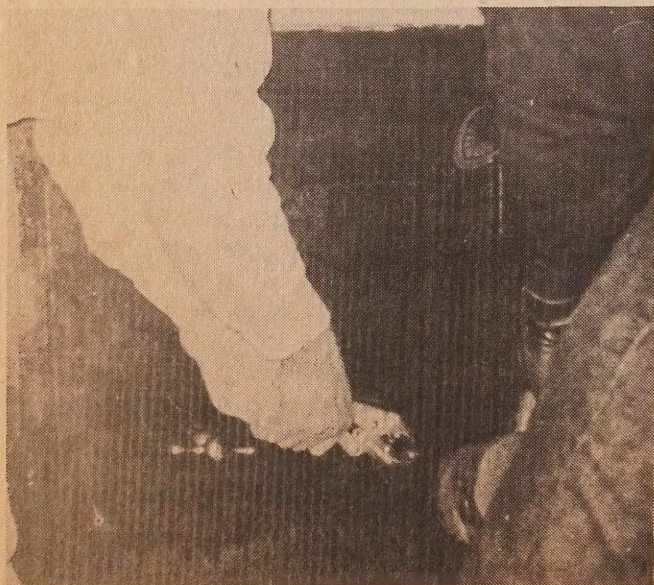
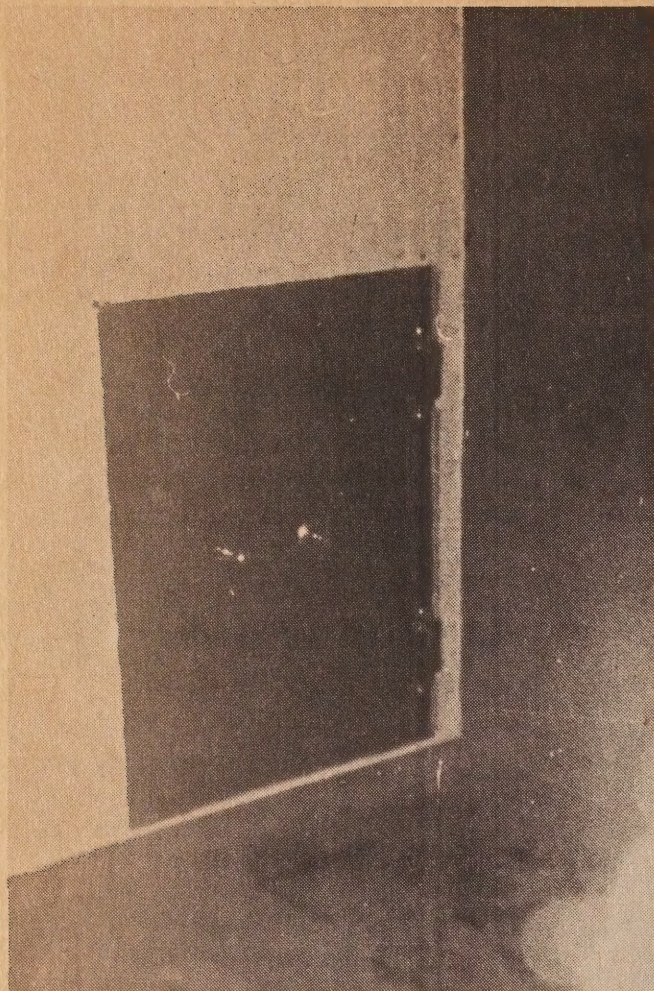
because he has NOBODY else and he is in no position to complain, is he? You phoney sanctimonious bastards!

Yes, Mr. & Mrs. Society, you are doing exactly what the Holy Book tells you to do, but are you REALLY doing it the way the Bible REALLY intended? You dear CHRISTIANS are going to be in for one hell of a surprise when you get to heaven (if you ever get there?) as even as little as I know about the Bible, I can see you are NOT doing what YOUR God really intended. You are making

a mockery of the Holy Book & it is time you smartened up. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", but this, Mr. & Mrs. Society means, when you do something you must REALLY want to do it and be SINCERE about it or the whole damn thing is USELESS! YOUR God is not easily fooled and he knows those of you who are SINCERE and he also knows those of you who are REALLY CHRISTIANS.

Yes, Mr. & Mrs. Society, if YOU REALLY want to help, by all means do so, but if not, forget the entire never-ending-mess and keep away from these kids as they have enough problems without your adding to them! Those of you who laugh at this open letter are the phoneys, and in reality, this letter was meant for them. In a way, these kids lives are in YOUR hands, and being the CHRISTIANS you CLAIM to be, what are you going to do about it? If anything. For God sake, don't just think about helping, start helping NOW, before another kid is beyond help and takes his life into his own hands!

Safecracking — the artists' ego



by a retired professional

The three of us, veterans of sieges and campaigns far too numerous to mention (besides that might get us ranked), were discussing how little recognition true artists receive in their life-times.

Sometimes that is a good thing, for in our case (no pun intended) recognition has always been followed by a court appearance, short swift trial, and long slow sentences. But an artist's ego is a hard thing to appease or even understand, sometimes even for the artist himself.

We were cutting up old jackpots and telling war stories, as retirement rests heavy on a man's shoulders. We're all retired burglars but as the story unfolds we will probably appear to be more like bunglers.

During our discussion a mysterious fourth shows up and regales us with a tale of a businessman who had locked his sandwiches or something in a safe to which he no longer had the combination. Right away we all get a rush, then a chill; after all, opening a safe sans combination is rather illegal. But instead of popping him in the chiclets for mockery and gawkery, we listen some more and start to chuckle and chortle.

He wants us to actually open up his safe on his premises and he'll pay us to do it. We immediately figure we can invite some guests and turn it all into a great party. Just what our shattered and undernourished artists' pride demands, an appreciative audience who won't arrest us. "Lead on!" says I and likewise my two stalwart companions.

Off we venture to meet the business in distress and have a consultation with the patient.

We had a heated discussion on the merits of various techniques and manners of opening the patient. We decided that as there were three artists present, we could employ one of the three techniques. We would use the quickest first, then go to the next if that failed and resort to the last style (which is the most time consuming and destructive) in the event all else failed.

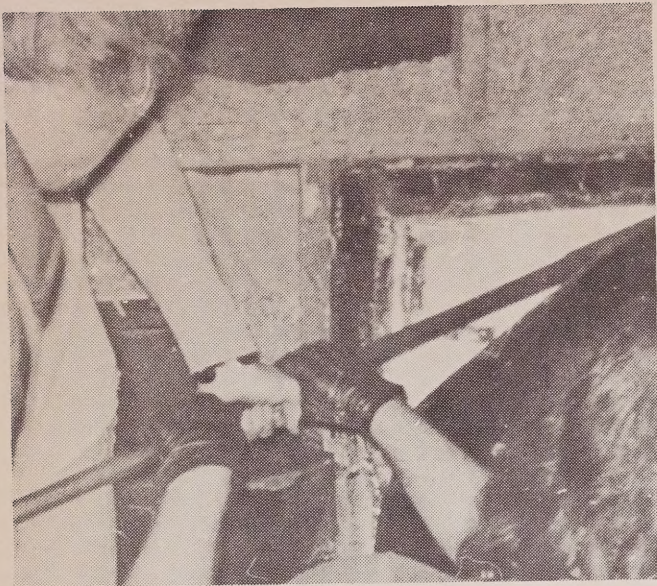
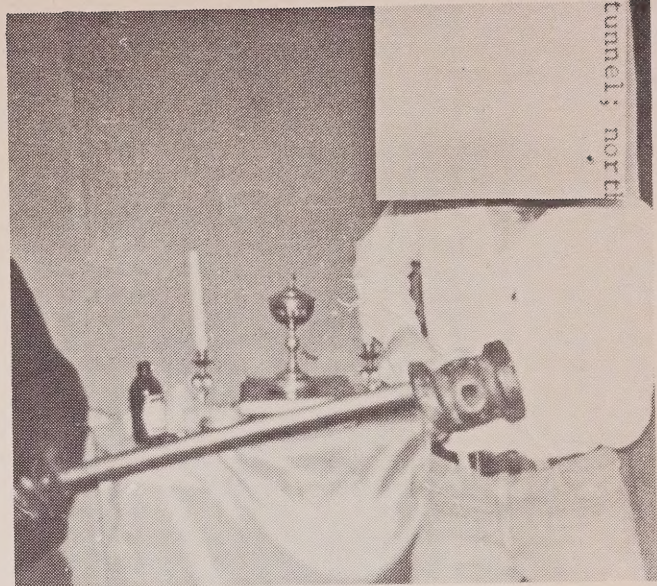
We tell the owner of the safe how we will go about attacking his safe and ask him to provide the necessary tools, which we list for him. Actor/artists present: three. Spectators present: more than fifteen, less than twenty. Photographers: two. Patient: a five-hundred pound antique.

We arrive and witness the tools that our generous client has provided and are dubious about their value in the task ahead; but troupers that we are, we push on with the show.

We quickly exhaust our first two techniques, and so resort to our last resort (which, to tell the truth, we figured we'd have to do right from the outset).

The result as you can see was: one locked safe opened; two pin-punches totaled; one safe door destroyed; one neck twisted; two shoulders bruised; three knuckles skinned; and the realization that retirement is a far better place to be than in the slammer.

tunnel; north



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